

Editorial

AN ATTACK ON A WINDMILL

"When I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide
Lodged with me useless, — — — — —"

Milton-On His Blindness

In the material world in which we struggle one often loses sight of his end and for it substitutes some other thing on which he places false value. If we fall into this error, our aim in life is to all intents and purposes frustrated even though we do not perceive the ensuing result.

A law student when first entering upon the study of law is usually somewhat confused as to the objects of his efforts, and unless he absorbs his knowledge in the proper light he is liable to fall into error. The proper time to impress on the student the duty owed to his fellow citizens, the ethics of his profession, the place which he is to take in society and the manner in which he is to exercise his "one talent" is while he is at law school. At this time he is sheltered from "this dark world and wide" and is more likely to conceive the true conception of his talent, not being at this time subject to the influences of false values to which he might otherwise fall prey without the proper guidance.

Many lawyers place the practice of law second to the acquisition of material wealth. They use their profession primarily to make money and herein lies the confusion of ends. In itself the dollar is not undesirable; on the contrary it is very necessary, but it should not occupy a position prior to the primary object. When this happens, he is failing to fulfill his duty to society. If he practices his profession in the true light, monetary success should necessarily follow.

The true light referred to is that approach to human relations which disregards ulterior motives and gives effect to the great principles on which our law is based. The medical doctor deals with the preservation of health and life and this is his great object; the lawyer deals with the protection of human rights and liberties — indeed a greater object. For this reason the legal profession is the most noble of the professions. As evidenced by history most people would rather lose their lives than their fundamental rights, without which life would not be worth living.

Unfortunately, the general public do not hold this view. They for the most part look on lawyers as parasites on society; a necessary evil in the social set-up. Could the reason for this be the abuses which flow from the confusion of basic aims?

To escape the pitfalls of a materialistic age which tend to obscure the end to be sought by lawyers, and to give to the profession its proper efficacy, the student should be moulded while the clay is supple.

This may be accomplished by a proper stress being placed on these matters firstly by lecturers who often are too engrossed in their particular subject to be able to see the forest for the trees. Again, good example, advice and a genuine interest on the part of the members of the bar will further this object. But ultimately the task is a subjective one to be left to the mind of the student who by the time he reaches law school should be mature enough to approach the matter in a reasonable mode and arrive at the proposed conclusion. However his task does not stop there. He must carry his principles into the world and adhere to them even in the face of opposition which he may not recognize as such at the time.

What use would it be to a contractor to assemble his tools and materials and proceed on his undertaking without the guidance of blue-prints? Again what would happen if he erroneously used false plans? In both cases chaos would ensue. So also the law student has to be guided by right principles to ensure a sound and enduring result.

If the student could be impressed by the onus which is placed on him to serve society instead of sapping it, then he would practise his talent in the true light with the resulting benefits to himself, to his profession and to his fellow man.

J. P. F.

"ATTENTION MEMBERS OF THE BAR"

The attention of the members of the profession is drawn to the present endeavour being made by the Faculty of the Law School to supplement the most generous gift of law books of the Chancellor of the University the Right Honourable Lord Beaverbrook.

The Faculty is interested in legal materials of every description: reports, texts, statutes, and legal periodicals.

Please communicate with Professor G. A. McAllister.

c/o Provincial Building, 55 Canterbury Street

Saint John, N. B.